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J. H. Hosmer

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891.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD IN HYMNS AND POEMS

BY

FREDERICK L. HOSMER

AND

WILLIAM C. GANNETT

BOSTON

ROBERTS BROTHERS

1890

APR 23 1891

Gift of the Publishers

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WILLIAM C. GANNETT

University Press
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE

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1890

TO

J. LL. J.

AND OUR FELLOW-WORKERS IN THE WEST

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THE THOUGHT OF GOD

One thought I have, my ample creed,
So deep it is and broad,
And equal to my every need,—
It is the thought of God.

Each morn unfolds some fresh surprise,
I feast at Life's full board;
And rising in my inner skies
Shines forth the thought of God.

At night my gladness is my prayer;
I drop my daily load,
And every care is pillowed there
Upon the thought of God.

I ask not far before to see,
But take in trust my road;
Life, death, and immortality
Are in my thought of God.

To this their secret strength they owed
The martyr's path who trod ;
The fountains of their patience flowed
From out their thought of God.

Be still the light upon my way,
My pilgrim staff and rod,
My rest by night, my strength by day,
O blessed thought of God !

1880

LISTENING FOR GOD

I HEAR it often in the dark,
  I hear it in the light, —
Where *is* the voice that calls to me
  With such a quiet might?
It seems but echo to my thought,
  And yet beyond the stars;
It seems a heart-beat in a hush,
  And yet the planet jars!

Oh, may it be that far within
  My inmost soul there lies
A *spirit-sky*, that opens with
  Those voices of surprise?
And can it be, by night and day,
  That firmament serene
Is just the heaven, where God himself,
  The Father dwells unseen?

O God within, so close to me
That every thought is plain,
Be Judge, be Friend, be Father still,
And in thy heaven reign!
Thy heaven is mine, — my very soul!
Thy words are sweet and strong;
They fill my inward silences
With music and with song.

They send me challenges to right,
And loud rebuke my ill;
They ring my bells of victory,
They breathe my 'Peace, be still!'
They ever seem to say, — 'My child,
Why seek me so all day?
Now journey inward to thyself.
And listen by the way!'

MILWAUKEE, 1870

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

O THOU, in all thy might so far,
  In all thy love so near,
Beyond the range of sun and star,
  And yet beside us here, —

What heart can comprehend thy name,
  Or, searching, find thee out,
Who art within, a quickening Flame,
  A Presence round about?

Yet though I know thee but in part,
  I ask not, Lord, for more:
Enough for me to know thou art,
  To love thee and adore.

O sweeter than aught else besides,
  The tender mystery
That like a veil of shadow hides
  The Light I may not see!

And dearer than all things I know
Is childlike faith to me,
That makes the darkest way I go
An open path to thee.

1876

CONSIDER THE LILIES, HOW THEY GROW

He hides within the lily
A strong and tender care,
That wins the earth-born atoms
To glory of the air;
He weaves the shining garments
Unceasingly and still,
Along the quiet waters,
In niches of the hill.

We linger at the vigil
With him who bent the knee
To watch the old-time lilies
In distant Galilee;
And still the worship deepens
And quickens into new,
As brightening down the ages
God's secret thrilleth through.

O Toiler of the lily,
  Thy touch is in the Man!
No leaf that dawns to petal
  But hints the angel-plan.
The flower-horizons open!
  The blossom vaster shows!
We hear thy wide worlds echo, —
  See how the lily grows!

Shy yearnings of the savage,
  Unfolding thought by thought,
To holy lives are lifted,
  To visions fair are wrought;
The races rise and cluster,
  And evils fade and fall,
Till chaos blooms to beauty,
  Thy purpose crowning all!

F. R. A. Festival, 1873

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

THE Lord is in his Holy Place
In all things near and far!
Shekinah of the snowflake, he,
And Glory of the star,
And Secret of the April land
That stirs the field to flowers,
Whose little tabernacles rise
To hold him through the hours.

He hides himself within the love
Of those whom we love best;
The smiles and tones that make our homes
Are shrines by him possessed;
He tents within the lonely heart
And shepherds every thought;
We find him not by seeking long, —
We lose him not, unsought.

Our art may build its Holy Place,
  Our feet on Sinai stand,
But Holiest of Holies knows
  No tread, no touch of hand;
The listening soul makes Sinai still
  Wherever we may be,
And in the vow, 'Thy will be done!'
  Lies all Gethsemane.

For C. W. W., CHICAGO, 1873

THE INDWELLING GOD

'O that I knew where I might find him!'

Go not, my soul, in search of him,
  Thou wilt not find him there, —
Or in the depths of shadow dim,
  Or heights of upper air.

For not in far-off realms of space
  The Spirit hath its throne;
In every heart it findeth place
  And waiteth to be known.

Thought answereth alone to thought,
  And Soul with soul hath kin;
The outward God he findeth not
  Who finds not God within.

And if the vision come to thee
  Revealed by inward sign,
Earth will be full of Deity
  And with his glory shine!

Thou shalt not want for company
  Nor pitch thy tent alone;
The indwelling God will go with thee
  And show thee of his own.

O gift of gifts, O grace of grace,
  That God should condescend
To make thy heart his dwelling-place
  And be thy daily Friend!

Then go not thou in search of him,
  But to thyself repair;
Wait thou within the silence dim
  And thou shalt find him there!

1879

THE HIGHWAY

'Whatever road I take joins the highway that leads to thee.'

When the night is still and far,
  Watcher from the shadowed deeps!
When the morning breaks its bar,
  Life that shines and wakes and leaps!
When old Bible-verses glow,
  Starring all the deep of thought,
Till it fills with quiet dawn
  From the peace our years have brought, —
    Sun within both skies, we see
    How all lights lead back to thee!

'Cross the field of daily work
  Run the footpaths, leading — where?
Run they east or run they west,
  One way all the workers fare.

Every awful thing of earth, —
Sin and pain and battle-noise;
Every dear thing, — baby's birth,
Faces, flowers, or lovers' joys, —
Is a wicket-gate, where we
Join the great highway to thee!

Restless, restless, speed we on, —
Whither in the vast unknown?
Not to you and not to me
Are the sealèd orders shown:
But the Hand that built the road,
And the Light that leads the feet,
And this inward restlessness,
Are such invitation sweet,
That where I no longer see,
Highway still must lead to thee!

For J. W. C., Brooklyn, 1876

A PSALM OF TRUST

I LITTLE see, I little know,
  Yet can I fear no ill:
He who hath guided me till now
  Will be my leader still.

No burden yet was on me laid
  Of trouble or of care,
But he my trembling step hath stayed,
  And given me strength to bear.

I came not hither of my will
  Or wisdom of mine own:
That higher Power upholds me still,
  And still must bear me on.

I knew not of this wondrous earth,
  Nor dreamed what blessings lay
Beyond the gates of human birth
  To glad my future way.

And what beyond this life may be
As little I divine, —
What love may wait to welcome me,
What fellowships be mine.

I know not what beyond may lie,
But look, in humble faith,
Into a larger life to die
And find new birth in death.

He will not leave my soul forlorn ;
I still must find him true,
Whose mercies have been new each morn
And every evening new.

Upon his providence I lean,
As lean in faith I must:
The lesson of my life hath been
A heart of grateful trust.

And so my onward way I fare
With happy heart and calm,
And mingle with my daily care
The music of my psalm.

1883

GLORIES THAT REMAIN

'If that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.'

Fairer grows the earth each morning
To the eyes that watch aright;
Every dew-drop sparkles warning
Of a miracle in sight;
Of some unsuspected glory
Waiting in the old and plain;
Poet's dream nor traveller's story
Words such wonders as remain.

Everywhere the gate of Beauty
Fresh across the pathway swings,
As we follow truth or duty
Inward to the heart of things;
And we enter, foolish mortals,
Thinking now the heart to find, —
There to gaze on vaster portals!
Still the Glory lies behind!

Faith I love! I love you deeper
As I press your portals through,
Heeding not the call of keeper,
Heeding sole the vision new!
All our creeds are hinting only
Of a faith of nobler strain:
God is living! are we lonely
'Mid his glories that remain?

F. R. A. Festival, 1874

THE LARGER FAITH

We pray no more, made lowly wise,
For miracle and sign;
Anoint our eyes to see within
The common the divine.

'Lo here, lo there,' no more we cry,
Dividing with our call
The mantle of thy presence, Lord,
That seamless covers all.

We turn from seeking thee afar
And in unwonted ways,
To build from out our daily lives
The temples of thy praise.

And if thy casual comings, Lord,
To hearts of old were dear,
What joy shall dwell within the faith
That feels thee ever near!

And nobler yet shall duty grow,
  And more shall worship be,
When thou art found in all our life,
  And all our life in thee.

1879

THE STREAM OF FAITH

From heart to heart, from creed to creed,
The hidden river runs;
It quickens all the ages down,
It binds the sires to sons, —
The stream of Faith, whose source is God,
Whose sound, the sound of prayer,
Whose meadows are the holy lives
Upspringing everywhere.

How deep it flowed in olden time,
When men by it were strong
To dare the untrod wilderness,
Charmed on by river-song!
Where'er they passed by hill or shore,
They gave the song a voice,
Till all the craggy land had heard
The Father's Faith rejoice.

And still it moves, a broadening flood ;
  And fresher, fuller grows
A sense as if the sea were near,
  Towards which the river flows!
O thou, who art the secret Source
  That rises in each soul,
Thou art the Ocean too, — thy charm,
  That ever-deepening roll !

For J. M., Newburyport, 1875

FOUND

'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.'

O NAME, all other names above,
What art thou not to me,
Now I have learned to trust thy love
And cast my care on thee!

What is our being but a cry,
A restless longing still,
Which thou alone canst satisfy,
Alone thy fulness fill!

Thrice blessed be the holy souls
That lead the way to thee,
That burn upon the martyr-rolls
And lists of prophecy.

And sweet it is to tread the ground
O'er which their faith hath trod;
But sweeter far, when thou art found,
The soul's own sense of God!

The thought of thee all sorrow calms ;
Our anxious burdens fall ;
His crosses turn to triumph-palms
Who finds in God his all.

1878

THEODORE

O Heart of all the shining day,
The green earth's still Delight,
Thou Freshness in the morning wind,
Thou Silence of the night,
Thou Beauty of our temple-walls,
Thou Strength within the stone, —
What is it we can offer thee
That is not first thine own?

Old memories throng: we think of those
Awhile with us who trod,
Whose hands yet lift within our lives, —
We called them 'Gift of God:'
And thine these shinings in our thought,
This eager, love-wrought hope,
This deathless faith they wait and watch
On some fair upper slope.

O, solemn-sweet the sureness grows,
When such as they have passed ;
The darkness fills, the silence thrills,
Their life pervades the Vast ;
The vanished virtue quickens through
And touches every star ;
Their unseen love — we know it thine,
Thy Living Love they are !

Parker Memorial Dedication, 1873

MY DEAD

I CANNOT think of them as dead
  Who walk with me no more;
Along the path of life I tread
  They have but gone before.

The Father's house is mansioned fair
  Beyond my vision dim;
All souls are his, and here or there
  Are living unto him.

And still their silent ministry
  Within my heart hath place,
As when on earth they walked with me
  And met me face to face.

Their lives are made forever mine;
  What they to me have been
Hath left henceforth its seal and sign
  Engraven deep within.

Mine are they by an ownership
Nor time nor death can free ;
For God hath given to Love to keep
Its own eternally.

1882

GREEN PASTURES AND STILL WATERS

CLEAR in memory's silent reaches
  Lie the pastures I have seen,
Greener than the sun-lit spaces
  Where the May has flung her green:
Needs no sun and needs no starlight
  To illume these fields of mine,
For the glory of dead faces
  Is the sun, the stars, that shine.

More than one I count my pastures
  As my life-path groweth long;
By their quiet waters straying
  Oft I lay me, and am strong.
And I call each by its giver,
  And the dear names bring to them
Glory as from shining faces
  In some New Jerusalem.

Yet, O well I can remember,
Once I called my pastures, Pain,
And their waters were a torrent
Sweeping through my life amain!
Now I call them Peace and Stillness,
Brightness of all Happy Thought,
Where I linger for a blessing
From my faces that are nought.

Nought? I fear not. If the Power
Maketh thus his pastures green,
Maketh thus his quiet waters,
Out of waste his heavens serene,
I can trust the mighty Shepherd
Loseth none he ever led;
Somewhere yet a greeting waits me
On the faces of my dead!

F. R. A. Festival, 1877

FATHER, TO THEE

FATHER, to thee we look in all our sorrow,
Thou art the fountain whence our healing flows;
Dark though the night, joy cometh with the morrow;
Safely they rest who on thy love repose.

When fond hopes fail and skies are dark before us,
When the vain cares that vex our life increase, —
Comes with its calm the thought that thou art o'er us,
And we grow quiet, folded in thy peace.

Nought shall affright us on thy goodness leaning,
Low in the heart faith singeth still her song;

Chastened by pain we learn life's deeper
meaning,
And in our weakness thou dost make us
strong.

Patient, O heart, though heavy be thy sorrows!
Be not cast down, disquieted in vain;
Yet shalt thou praise him when these dark-
ened furrows,
Where now he plougheth, wave with golden
grain.

1881

THROUGH UNKNOWN PATHS

O THOU who art of all that is
  Beginning both and end,
We follow thee through unknown paths,
  Since all to thee must tend:
Thy judgments are a mighty deep
  Beyond all fathom-line;
Our wisdom is the childlike heart,
  Our strength, to trust in thine.

We bless thee for the skies above,
  And for the earth beneath,
For hopes that blossom here below
  And wither not with death;
But most we bless thee for thyself,
  O heavenly Light within,
Whose dayspring in our hearts dispels
  The darkness of our sin.

Be thou in joy our deeper joy,
  Our comfort when distressed;
Be thou by day our strength for toil,
  And thou by night our rest.
And when these earthly dwellings fail
  And Time's last hour is come,
Be thou, O God, our dwelling-place
  And our eternal home!

1877

HE THAT INHABITETH ETERNITY

WHO does not feel how weak
Are all our words to speak
Of him, the Infinite, —
Below all depth, above all height!
Yet hath no other speech
To me such wondrous reach
As this the prophet saith: that he
Inhabiteth Eternity!

We dwell in Time: our ear
Is deafened by things near;
Darkly we see, and know
Only in part, also.
From troubles that annoy
Plucking no future joy,
Sweetening failure's bitterness
With no deferred but sure success, —
As if the passing hour were all,
With it we rise and fall:
The while that he
Inhabiteth Eternity!

Patient and suffering long
With man's mistakes and wrong;
Seeing how all threads come
In place in Time's vast loom,
And in the finished web fulfil
The pattern of his perfect will;
To whom as one is seen
What is, will be, hath been, —
Tranquil and lifted clear
Above our fevered atmosphere,
Forever dwelleth he
In the sure strength of his Eternity!

O Father of my life,
Give me, amid its strife,
To bear within my breast
The secret of thy rest, —
The river of thy peace within,
Whose banks are always fresh and green;
Give me, while here in Time I be,
Also to dwell with thee in thine Eternity.

1879

ON THE MOUNT

Not always on the mount may we
Rapt in the heavenly vision be;
The shores of thought and feeling know
The Spirit's tidal ebb and flow.

Lord, it is good abiding here —
We cry, the heavenly presence near:
The vision vanishes, our eyes
Are lifted into vacant skies!

Yet hath one such exalted hour
Upon the soul redeeming power,
And in its strength through after days
We travel our appointed ways;

Till all the lowly vale grows bright
Transfigured in remembered light,
And in untiring souls we bear
The freshness of the upper air.

The mount for vision, — but below
The paths of daily duty go,
And nobler life therein shall own
The pattern on the mountain shown.

1882

LOYALTY

When courage fails, and faith burns low,
And men are timid grown,
Hold fast thy loyalty, and know
That Truth still moveth on.

For unseen messengers she hath
To work her will and ways,
And even human scorn and wrath
God turneth to her praise.

She can both meek and lordly be,
In heavenly might secure;
With her is pledge of victory,
And patience to endure.

The race is not unto the swift,
The battle to the strong,
When dawn her judgment-days that sift
The claims of right and wrong.

And more than thou canst do for Truth
Can she on thee confer,
If thou, O heart, but give thy youth
And manhood unto her.

For she can make thee inly bright,
Thy self-love purge away,
And lead thee in the path whose light
Shines to the perfect day.

Who follow her, though men deride,
In her strength shall be strong;
Shall see their shame become their pride,
And share her triumph-song!

1881

PASSING UNDERSTANDING

'The peace of God, that passeth all understanding.'

MANY things in life there are
Past our 'understanding' far,
And the humblest flower that grows
Hides a secret no man knows.

All unread by outer sense
Lies the soul's experience;
Mysteries around us rise,
We, the deeper mysteries!

Who hath scales to weigh the love
That from heart to heart doth move,
The divine unrest within,
Or the keen remorse for sin?

Who can map those tracks of light
Where the fancy wings its flight,
Or to outer vision trace
Thought's mysterious dwelling-place?

Who can sound the silent sea
Where, with sealèd orders, we
Voyage from birth's forgotten shore
Toward the unknown land before?

While we may so little scan
Of thy vast creation's plan,
Teach us, O our God, to be
Humble in our walk with thee!

May we trust, through ill and good,
Thine unchanging Fatherhood,
And our highest wisdom find
In the reverent heart and mind!

Clearer vision shall be ours,
Larger wisdom, ampler powers,
And the meaning yet appear
Of what passes knowledge here.

1885

THE SUNNY SIDE

A SILVERY tide, called 'Sunny Side,'
  Goes creeping around the earth,
And never a place but wins a grace
  In the jubilant flood of mirth,
From the dancing gleam on the fretted
      stream
  To the dimple on baby's cheek,
That in and out, to his merry shout,
  Twinkles a hide-and-seek.

Wherever it goes, the darkness glows
  And men and women sing;
It fills their eyes with a glad surprise,
  And stays their sorrowing;
The heart is a-tune, the world is June,
  Nothing is old or gray,
As it passes along with the swell of a song,
  Like a musical break of day.

Spirit of Love, in the blue above
  Who makest the sun to flame,
Who guidest the flight of the planet bright,
  And callest the stars by name,
It is thou dost hide in the 'Sunny Side,'
  And creepest from heart to heart!
And, soul or clod, we share the God,
  Who comes, — and the shadows part!

1875

FLOWER SUNDAY

THE rose is queen among the flowers,
None other is so fair :
The lily nodding on her stem
With fragrance fills the air.
But sweeter than the lily's breath
And than the rose more fair,
The tender love of human hearts
That springeth everywhere.

The rose will fade and fall away,
The lily too will die :
But love shall live forevermore
Beyond the starry sky.
Then sweeter than the lily's breath
And than the rose more fair,
The tender love of human hearts
Upspringing everywhere.

1875

THE LITTLE ONES

Children's Sunday

ALL hidden lie the future ways
Their little feet shall fare;
But holy thoughts within us stir
And rise on lips of prayer.

To us beneath the noonday heat,
Dust-stained and travel-worn,
How beautiful their robes of white,
The freshness of their morn!

Within us wakes the childlike heart,
Back rolls the tide of years;
The silent wells of memory start
And flow in happy tears.

O little ones, ye cannot know
The power with which ye plead,
Nor why, as on through life we go,
The little child doth lead.

1885

CHRISTMAS

STILL the angels sing on high,
Still the bearded men draw nigh,
Bringing worship with the morn,
When a little child is born ;
Baby-glory in the place,
Star-look on the mother's face,
Psalm within the mother's heart, —
Christmas all in counterpart !

Quaintest wight that ever stirred,
With thy ears that never heard,
Eyes that eye a brand-new world,
Tiny limbs but half uncurled,
Wee-bit Adam ! wee-bit Christ !
Earth, by thee new-paradised,
Blooms to miracles again,
Echoes God's ' Good-will to men ! '

Blessings on the little child
In the cave far-off and wild!
For that nursery divine
Tells me well, O baby mine,
That *thou* art Emmanuel,
'God with *us*,' come here to dwell, —
Come to say, 'Since time began,
Son of God is Son of Man.'

1875

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE

From the German of Karl Gerok

THE church-bells for service are ringing,
The father and mother have gone;
And three little golden-haired children
Are left in the doorway alone.

For these are too young for the meeting —
The busy and frolicsome elves —
So they think to praise God like their elders
With a holy-time all by themselves!

Each one a big volume has taken
And holds it top-down 'gainst the breast;
Forthwith the devout little mimics
Sing out in their loudest and best!

They know not themselves what they're singing,
And each takes a tune of his own: —
Sing on, O ye children, your voices
Are heard at the heavenly throne!

And there stand your angels in glory,
  While songs to the Father they raise,
Who out of the mouths of the children
  Hath perfected worship and praise.

Sing on; over there in the garden
  There singeth an answering choir;
'T is the brood of light-hearted birdlings
  That chirp in the bloom-laden brier.

Sing on; there is trust in your music, —
  The Father, he asks not for more;
Quick flieth the heart that is sinless
  Like a dove to the heavenly door.

Sing on; we sing who are older,
  Yet little we too understand:
And our Bibles, how often we hold them
  The bottom-side up in our hand!

Sing on; in the songs of our service
  We follow each note of the card;
But alas, in our strife with each other
  How oft is the melody marred!

Sing on ; for earth's loftiest music
Though ever so fine and so clear,
What is it ? The lisping of children,
A breath in the Infinite ear !

1877

JESUS *WHO?*

'The other day I told my very little daughter, answering a question of hers, that a certain picture was Jesus. "Jesus WHO? *" said she — "Jesus God?"'*

AND are the children prophets, then,
Or have they lived before,
To speak the words so simple-wise,
And babble spirit-lore?

Their wonder plays on questions quaint,
All vision and surprise,
Like clumsy gates whose careless swing
Reveals half Paradise.

Yes, little May, you 've said it, —
'God' *is* his other name;
Ours always ends with Father's;
Yours is the very same.

Our earth is one home only,
  Our Father only one,
And all the folks are brothers,
  And every one his son.

And up and down the city
  Wherever you have trod,
It's Mary-, Maud-, and Katy-,
  John-God, and Willie-God.

O Life and Love, in whom we are,
  From whom, to whom all lives,
I thank thee for the christening
  Thy little prophet gives.

The simple Bible long ago
  Hinted the secret well,
When child-faith named its hero-babes,
  'Judah' and 'Israel.'[1]

Why strangely sounds the name divine
  Blending with ours to-day?
Is God an ancient lost afar,
  A fashion gone for aye?

[1] 'Judah,' i. e., *Praise God:* 'Israel,' i. e., *God strives.*

Ah, no, but thought too awful grows
For name or speech or look :
In silent floods the secret pours
That babbled in the brook.

1871

CHRISTMAS

To-day be joy in every heart,
For lo, the angel throng
Once more above the listening earth
Repeats the advent song:

'Peace on the earth, good-will to men!'
Before us goes the star
That leads us on to holier births
And life diviner far!

Ye men of strife, forget to-day
Your harshness and your hate;
Too long ye stay the promised years
For which the nations wait!

And ye upon the tented field,
Sheathe, sheathe to-day the sword!
By love, and not by might, shall come
The kingdom of the Lord.

O star of human faith and hope!
Thy light shall lead us on,
Until it fades in morning's glow,
And heaven on earth is won.

1877

JESUS

Immortal by their deed and word,
Like light around them shed,
Still speak the prophets of the Lord,
Still live the sainted dead.

The voice of old by Jordan's flood
Yet floats upon the air;
We hear it in beatitude,
In parable and prayer.

And still the beauty of that life
Shines star-like on our way,
And breathes its calm amid the strife
And burden of to-day.

Earnest of life forevermore,
That life of duty here, —
The trust that in the darkest hour
Looked forth and knew no fear!

Spirit of Jesus, still speed on!
Speed on thy conquering way,
Till every heart the Father own,
And all his will obey!

1880

THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Praise to God and thanksgiving!
Hearts, bow down, and voices, sing!
Praises to the Glorious One,
All his year of wonder done!

Praise him for his budding green,
April's resurrection-scene:
Praise him for his shining hours,
Starring all the land with flowers:

Praise him for his summer rain,
Feeding, day and night, the grain:
Praise him for his tiny seed,
Holding all his world shall need!

Praise him for his garden root,
Meadow grass and orchard fruit:
Praise for hills and valleys broad, —
Each the Table of the Lord!

Praise him now for snowy rest,
Falling soft on Nature's breast:
Praise for happy dreams of birth
Brooding in the quiet earth!

For his year of wonder done,
Praise to the All-Glorious One!
Hearts, bow down, and voices, sing
Praise and love and thanksgiving!

Harvest Festival, St. Paul, 1882

THE NEW YEAR

'BEHOLD,' — in vision said
The Voice to John on Patmos —
'I make all things new!'
Vanish before his view
The earth and heavens old;
In splendor manifold
New heavens and earth appear
To the enraptured seer:
And lo! descending from the skies,
Fairer than storied paradise,
He saw the New Jerusalem, —
Apparelled as a bride
With gold and precious gem, —
And heard a Voice that cried:
'God's dwelling is with men,
And he will wipe away all tears,
And death shall be no more, nor pain;

Passed are the things of former years :
Behold, I make all things new !
Write: for faithful are these words and true.'

So speaks to thee, O heart,
As the swift years depart
The re-creating Voice.
Turn not in vain regret
To thy fond yesterdays,
But rather forward set
Thy face toward the untrodden ways.
Open thine eyes to see
The good in store for thee, —
New love, new thought, new service too
For him who daily maketh thy life new.
Nor think thou aught is lost
Or left behind upon the silent coast
Of thy spent years ;
Give o'er thy faithless fears.
Whate'er of real good —
Of thought, or deed, or holier mood —
Thy life hath known
Abideth still thine own,
And hath within significance

Of more than Time's inheritance.
Thy good is prophecy
Of better still to be.
In the future thou shalt find
How far the Fact hath left behind
Thy fondest Dream; how deeper than all sense
Or thought of thine, thy life's sure Providence!

1881

THE DAY

Routine of duties,
  Commonplace cares, —
Angels disguised
  Entertained unawares ; —

Sweet human fellowships
  Kindred and near,
Drawing the soul from
  Its self atmosphere ;

The book's friendly company,
  Leading along
To fields of new knowledge
  And uplands of song ;

In-shinings of Nature,
  Morning's red bars,
Waysides in beauty,
  Night with its stars ;

The nearer communion
  In silence apart,
When thought blooms to prayer
  And song fills the heart,

While the things unseen
  Grow more and more real,
And life deepens and broadens
  Toward larger ideal: —

How many the blessings
  Each day has to give
The soul that is seeking
  Truly to live!

1885

THE HILLS OF THE LORD

God ploughed one day with an earthquake,
And drove his furrows deep!
The huddling plains upstarted,
The hills were all a-leap!

But that is the mountain's secret,
Age-hidden in their breast;
'God's peace is everlasting,'
Are the dream-words of their rest.

He hath made them the haunt of beauty,
The home elect of his grace;
He spreadeth his mornings on them,
His sunsets light their face.

His thunders tread in music
Of footfalls echoing long,
And carry majestic greeting
Around the silent throng.

His winds bring messages to them,
  Wild storm-news from the main;
They sing it down to the valleys
  In the love-song of the rain.

Green tribes from far come trooping,
  And over the uplands flock;
He weaveth the zones together
  In robes for his risen rock.

They are nurseries for young rivers;
  Nests for his flying cloud;
Homesteads for new-born races,
  Masterful, free, and proud.

The people of tired cities
  Come up to their shrines and pray;
God freshens again within them,
  As he passes by all day.

And lo, I have caught their secret,
  The beauty deeper than all,
This faith, — that life's hard moments,
  When the jarring sorrows befall,

Are but God ploughing his mountains;
And the mountains yet shall be
The source of his grace and freshness
And his peace everlasting to me.

WHITEFIELD, 1870

SUNDAY ON THE HILL-TOP

Only ten miles from the city, —
  And how I am lifted away
To the peace that passeth knowing,
  And the light that is not of day!

All alone on the hill-top!
  Nothing but God and me,
And the spring-time's resurrection,
  Far shinings of the sea,

The river's laugh in the valley,
  Hills dreaming of their past;
And all things silently opening,
  Opening into the Vast!

Eternities past and future
  Seem clinging to all I see,
And things immortal cluster
  Around my bended knee.

That pebble — is older than Adam!
Secrets it hath to tell;
These rocks — they cry out history,
Could I but listen well.

That pool knows the ocean-feeling
Of storm and moon-led tide;
The sun finds its East and West therein,
And the stars find room to glide.

That lichen's crinkled circle
Creeps with the Life Divine,
Where the Holy Spirit loitered
On its way to this face of mine, —

On its way to the shining faces
Where angel-lives are led,
And *I* am the lichen's circle
That creeps with the tiny tread.

I can hear these violets chorus
To the sky's benediction above: —
And we all are together lying
On the bosom of Infinite Love.

I — I am a part of the poem,
Of its every sight and sound;
For my heart beats inward rhymings
To the Sabbath that lies around.

Oh, the peace at the heart of Nature!
Oh, the light that is not of day!
Why seek it afar forever,
When it cannot be lifted away?

BLUE HILL, May 21, 1871

THE CATHEDRAL

SHELF over shelf the mountain rose ;
And, as we climbed, they seemed the stair
That scales a minster's wall to seek
  Some high-hid cell of prayer.

But every stair was carpeted
With mosses soft of gray and green,
And gold and crimson arabesques
  Trailed in and out between.

Up, up, o'er ferny pavements still,
O'er dim mosaics of the wood,
O'er rocky terraces, we trod,
  Till on the height we stood.

About the ancient mountain-walls
The silent wildernesses clung ;
In solemn frescos, moving slow,
  The clouds their shadows flung.

Along the valley-deeps below
The shimmer of a forest floor, —
A leafy brightness, like the sea,
  Wide twinkling o'er and o'er.

Niched in the mighty minster, we,
Beneath the dome of radiant blue :
Cathedral-hush on every side,
  And worship breathing through !

There came wild music on the winds,
The chanting of the forest choir,
Shaken across the rangèd hills
  As over a chorded lyre.

Then pauses as for quiet prayer,
And lulls, in which the listeners heard
Home-voices speak, while faces neared
  Swifter than any bird.

Of Strength eternal, by whose will
The hills their steadfast places keep,
Whose Right is like the mountains high,
  Whose Judgments are a deep, —

In grand old Bible verse we spoke,
And following close like echoes sped
The poems best beloved. The words
  Along the silence fled.

The Silence, awful Living Word
Behind all sound, behind all thought,
Whose speech is Nature-yet-to-be,
  The Poem yet unwrought!

That day it spake within the soul,
Through sense all strangely blent with sense:
The vision took majestic rhythm, —
  We *heard* the firmaments!

And listened, time and space forgot,
As flowed the lesson for the day, —
'Order is Beauty; Law is Love;
  Childlike his worlds obey.'

And all the heaven seemed folding down
Above the shining earth's sweet face,
Till in our hearts they touched! *We* felt
  The thrill of their embrace.

Then, in its peace, we wandered down
Our rocky staircase from the height ;
On dim mosaics of the wood
We met the climbing Night.

Sunday on 'Bald Cap,' September, 1876

THE PAST

For us no Past? Nay, what is present sweetness
But yesterdays dissolving in to-day?
No Past? It flowers in every new completeness,
And scarce from eye and ear can hide away.

These berries, mottling blue the rocky hollows,
Still cluster with the blossom-trick of June;
The cloud-led shadow loiters there and follows
O'er crags sun-stained by centuries of noon;
Yon aged pine waves young defiant gesture
When hustling winds pant by in wild seamood;
The valley's grace in all its shining vesture, —
Ages have carved it from the solitude;

Low sings the stream in murmurs faint recalling
The chant of floods the solitude once heard;
And this wide quiet on the hill-tops falling
Made hush at eves that listener never stirred.

And as on *us* it falls, our laughter stilling,
Dim echoes cross it of all old delight!
The joy, along the soul's far reaches thrilling
To glory of the summer day and night,
Has been inwrought by many a summer-hour
Of past selves long forgot, — enrichment slow,
Attuning mind and heart with mystic power
To the fresh marvel of this sunset's glow.
I think we see our valley's brightness brighter
For faces that once brightened by our side;
The peace of the eternal mountains deepens
At thought of peace on faces that have died.

For us no Past? Nay, what is present sweetness?
Dear yesterdays dissolving in to-day!

The Past — it flowers in every new completeness
Of thought, faith, hope ; and so shall be for aye.

Sunset on 'Crow Nest,' August, 1875

SUMMER CHEMISTRY

What does it take
A day to make, —
A day at the Bear Camp Ossipee?
White clouds a-sail in the shining blue,
Dropping a shadow to dredge the lands;
A mountain-wind, and a marching storm,
And a sound in the trees like waves on sands;
A mist to soften the shaggy side
Of the great green hill, till it lies as dim
As the hills in a childhood memory;
The crags and the ledges silver-chased,
Where yesterday's rainy runlets raced;
The back of an upland pasture steep,
With delicate fern-beds notching wide
The dark wood-line where the birches keep
Candlemas all the summer-tide;
Brown-flashing across the meadow bright
The stream that gems its malachite;
And, watching his valley, Chocorua grim,
And a golden sunset watching him!

Add — fifty lives of young and old,
Of tired and sad, of strong and bold,
And every heart a deeper sea
Than its own owner dreams can be ;
Add eyes whose glances have the law
Of coursing planets in their draw ;
Add careless hands that touch and part,
And hands that greet with a heaven's sense ;
Add little children in their glee
Uprunning to a mother's knee,
Their earliest altar ; add her heart,
Their feeble, brooding Providence : —

Add this to that, and thou shalt see
What goes to summer chemistry, —
What the God takes,
Each time he makes
One summer-day at Ossipee.

Bear Camp River House, WEST OSSIPEE,
August, 1877

WHERE DID IT GO?

WHERE did yesterday's sunset *go*,
When it faded down the hills so slow,
And the gold grew dim, and the purple light
Like an army with banners passed from sight?
Will its flush go into the golden-rod,
Its thrill to the purple aster's nod,
Its crimson fleck the maple-bough,
And the Autumn-glory begin from now?

Deeper than flower-fields sank the glow
Of the silent pageant passing slow.

It flushed all night in many a dream,
It thrilled in the folding hush of prayer,
It glided into a poet's song,
It is setting still in a picture rare;

It changed by the miracle none can see
To the shifting lights of a symphony;
And in resurrections of faith and hope
The glory died on the shining slope.

For it left its light on the hills and seas
That rim a thousand memories.

WEST OSSIPEE, 1877

RECOGNITION

TWICE have I turned to hear a tone,
  And thrice have I seen a look,
That tell me well the soul that I love
  Is to me but a sealèd book.

'T was only the name of her little child,
  And a 'Darling!' one day as she kissed;
But twice those household words were strains
  Out of exquisite music missed.

I remember the raptured hour she stood
  With love-light haloing her,
When her lips were dim in the crimson tides
  From the deeps of joy astir:

And once, 'mid the pain of farewell tears
  For an exile seaward doomed,
How her form upreached like a quivering stem
  And a new face suddenly bloomed:

And then, a day in a shaded room,
A day in the valley of Death; —
She must journey and wrestle alone, — and we,
We waited with bated breath,

Until the radiant marvel broke
Of her resurrection-face,
And the weary eyes, her victory won,
So peacefully filled with grace.

Three days that star-look on us beamed,
And the bed was a holy shrine,
Where soft we worshipped the new-born Child
O'erhung by the Mother's sign!

Slowly it faded, and welcome grew
For the old dear eyes returned, —
The light of our home, but not the eyes
Where the angel-look had burned.

Do you wonder an awe enfolds my love
For the presence with whom I dwell, —
My inmost friend, but a stranger too,
Whom I know not over well?

Her soul to me is an Upper Land,
  Where mornings rise unseen
On pathless mountain-mysteries
  And dells of hidden green.

I am so glad of her gardens sweet
  Too sacred for me to walk,
So glad of the sunlit heights too far
  To echo our mingled talk!

And I try to climb and listen and watch;
  For may be the sense will grow,
Till into her loneliness I may press
  And all of her sweetness know!

A marvel! But what if there be a truth
  Passing in wonder this?
Can she be to *herself* as dim, unknown,
  And the best of her nature miss?

Can there be in us all those heights of will
  And shadowy deeps of thought,
A land in the heart of each one's life
  With self-surprises fraught,—

Whither, in sudden mystical hours
  When the conscious self is forgot,
We are rapt as into an upper self,
  And stand in the light of a spot,

Where are born those exquisite tones that stray
  To startle the common days,
And the look that heralds our angel-smile
  Dawns into our eyes and ways?

Only a minute, — and then we are back
  In the meadows far below,
Where the life-winds sweep and the life-streams run,
  And nought of their source we know!

I verily think that she I love
  Would hardly a meaning trace,
Should I speak to her of that twice-heard tone
  And the thrice-illumined face.

1872

IN A LOOK

All the Morning in a face, —
Freshness of all happy space!
Sense of sunrise in a sky
Serious still with stars gone by;
Sense of song in waking woods,
Winds a-laugh in solitudes,
Dawn surprising dewy fields,
Springing sounds as slumber yields,
Breaths of prayer, the rush of wings, —
Morning, deep with happy things!

Summer Twilight in a face!
Evening shadows stilling space;
Two stars in a silent sky;
After-calm, — a sun gone by;
Wood-paths darkening, bird-song closing,
Flowers on their stems reposing;

Widening, widening, from the grass
Rhythmic tides of music pass, —
Pass within, and hush the streams,
Whose thought-babble dies in dreams!

These before me seem to rise,
When they look me in the eyes.

1885

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

W. H. F.

Fifty times the years have turned,
Since the heart within him burned
With its wistfulness to be
An apostle sent of thee.

Closely in his Master's tread
Still to follow, till he read
Tone of voice and look of face,
Print of wound and sign of grace.

Reading there for fifty years,
Pressing after, till the tears
And the smiles would come and go
At the self-same joy and woe,—

Sharing with him shouts of 'Mad!'
When the bold front to the bad
Bent to pluck the 'little ones'
From the feet of fellow-sons,—

Sharing in his inner peace,
Sharing all but his release, —
He is with us while the chimes
Ring our blessing fifty times.

Listening boys across the field
Hear, and hope *they* may not yield :
Are they listening from the air, —
Boys who started with him there ?

PHILADELPHIA, 1875

THE TEACHER

G. R. N.

A LIGHT upon the harvest-field,
A 'Well-done!' in the air:
'Rest-Angel, only *weary* yield!'
Rose up his eager prayer.

Again in work went by the day,
Till working hands grew thin;
Once more the restful shining lay, —
The old man entered in.

A teacher he, in white-haired youth;
The body's cloister, old, —
The spirit growing young with Truth
Through birthdays manifold.

A teacher he of oracles,
And one his life did sing:
The field lies always Harvest-white,
If only lies the Spring.

CAMBRIDGE, 1868

THE CLIFF AT NEWPORT

I WALK the Cliff, in earlier days oft trod
By one whose advent brought new life to men;
A prophet of the soul, speaking again
To earth-bound hearts of the deep things of God.
Below, the passionate sea still beats in vain,
And white sails gleam along the horizon broad;
The same sky bends above — beneath, the sod
As then is freshened by the Summer rain.
But, interfused with all, there shines to-day
A beauty born not of the earth or skies,
Making twice fair what was so fair before:
'T is that a noble Soul has passed this way,
Leaving a holy memory to rise
And speak to thought and feeling evermore.

1884

IN SLEEP

L. N. R.

'He giveth his beloved (in) sleep.'

Not in our waking hours alone
His constancy and care are known ;
But locked in slumber fast and deep
He giveth to us while we sleep.

What giveth He? From toil release,
Quiet from God, night's starlit peace ;
Till with the coming of the morn
We greet the day, like it new-born.

And pondering this mystery,
There came a larger truth to me, —
How in the sleep that we call death
He sleepeth not nor slumbereth,

But still sustains the silent soul
Until the shadows backward roll,
And with the passing of the night
It wakens in immortal light!

What giveth He? No more again
To know the touch of mortal pain;
All weakness past, each fetter riven, —
For earth the larger life of heaven!

Dear friend, as o'er thy pallid face
The tall white lilies breathed their peace,
And stillness like a solitude
Enwrapt the tearful multitude,

How sweetly on that sea of calm
Floated the music of the psalm, —
The Spirit's voice upon the deep, —
'He giveth his beloved sleep!'

Once more the sun with lavish hand
Pours lengthening day along the land;
But not with spring-time bloom and bird
Thy smile returns, thy voice is heard:

Yet still we say the old-time words
'In life, in death, we are the Lord's:'
And trust thee to his love to keep
Who giveth to his own in sleep.

March 16, 1877

MINISTRY

E. A. B.

JUST on the threshold of threescore-and-ten —
An upward pathway, shining more and more —
She heard the call, and passed within the door
Whence none that enters ever comes again.
Henceforth will Want await her step in vain,
Wise Charity will have a lessened store:
The beatings of a faithful heart are o'er,
And struggling Truth has lost a loyal brain.
Ah, foolish plaint! Hath God no other sphere
For virtue's use, and love, and loyalty,
That they should perish with the body's breath?
O noble Friend, thy life's long service here
Thou crownest now with its best ministry,
And quickenest faith beside the door of death!

November, 1879

THE MINISTER'S JOURNEY

Not to the lanes of England,
  Cathedral-aisles of France,
Or up the mountain-hollows
  Where Alpine torrents glance;

Not in the storied cities
  And old highways of life,
Where shadowy generations
  Have passed in song and strife;

Where Raphael hath painted,
  Or Socrates was born,
Or prophets once were cradled
  In Nazareths of scorn;—

But on more wonderful journeys
  Than any the pilgrims know,
Our traveller has been roving,—
  The book in his heart can show.

He has voyaged with the Captains
  Who sail the seas of thought,
Daring with them the tempest,
  Hailing with them the port.

And many a dreamer's island
  Has added to his lore
The hope that made it Patmos, —
  One heavenly vision more.

In lands men deemed unholy
  He gleaned from every clod
Some treasure-trove, revealing
  Horizons new of God.

Till Heathenesse grew homelike ;
  While the traveller's tale was still
Of a Ceaseless Care, whose presence
  Out-worketh good from ill.

And unto sacred places,
  The Palestines within,
By pathways of the Spirit,
  Our traveller hath been.

Along the silent beaches
That men call Birth and Death,
Rimming our fields of summer,
Giving us ocean-breath,

He paces as a watcher
Watching the tidal sweep;
And his greeting is full of music
Caught from the central deep.

He knows the founts of laughter;
Where psalms in mothers rise;
How purpose dawns in manhood,
And love in maiden eyes.

In still lanes of confession,
In solemn aisles of prayer,
On Alps of high endeavor, —
We meet him everywhere!

The others see but Europe,
And go as feet may fare;
Our pilgrim, still out-sailing,
Sees many an Outre-Mer!

To J. W. C., December 19, 1884

IN TWOS

Somewhere in the world there hide
Garden-gates that no one sees
Save they come in happy twos, —
Not in ones, nor yet in threes.

But from every maiden's door
Leads a pathway straight and true ;
Map and survey know it not, —
He who finds, finds room for two!

Then they see the garden-gates!
Never skies so blue as theirs,
Never flowers so many-sweet,
As for those who come in pairs.

Round and round the alleys wind :
Now a cradle bars the way,
Now a little mound, behind, —
So the two go through the day.

When no nook in all the lanes
But has heard a song or sigh,
Lo! another garden-gate
Opens as the two go by.

In they wander, knowing not;
'Five and Twenty!' fills the air
With a silvery echo low,
All about the startled pair.

Happier yet *these* garden-walks:
Closer, heart to heart, they lean;
Stiller, softer, falls the light;
Few the twos, and far between.

Till, at last, as on they pass
Down the paths so well they know,
Once again at hidden gates
Stand the two: they enter slow.

Golden Gates of 'Fifty Years,'
May *our* two your latchet press!
Garden of the Sunset Land,
Hold their dearest happiness!

Then a quiet walk again:
Then a wicket in the wall:
Then one, stepping on alone, —
Then two at the Heart of All!

December 22, 1879

POEM AND DOGMA

'T was Schliemann back from Troy,
With relics bronze and gold:
Where other eyes saw violets,
He saw the city old.

And, fondling a brown skull, —
'My learned friend,' said he,
'Tells me that this a maiden's was,
In Troy beyond the sea;

And from these angles here
Of brow and cheek-bone fine,
He judges that my maiden was
A creature quite divine.

'Ah, yes!' he added low,
'Virchow was right just there,
For *all* the maidens of old Troy
Were beautiful and rare.'

By summer chance we met,
And sat in chatting mood:
Said one, 'How noble Jesus' word
In that Beatitude!'

'Ah, yes!' chimed in a friend,
'You speak it truly there,
For *all* that Jesus said or was,
Was right beyond compare.'

'And Paul,' one said, 'was wrong;
How far from light he trod!' —
'But then, you know,' my lady chirped,
''T is *all* the Word of God.'

The artlessness the same!
And why should tears half-start
Over the fabled beauty gone, —
Poem of German heart;

While, with half-angry thought,
I smile away the *creed*
Of fabled beauty they would fain
Persuade me that I need?

Angry! who know their creeds
  Were poems, too, — that died;
That all the world's old dogmas are
  Its poems petrified.

1881

THE HALO

'One London dealer in birds received, when the fashion was at its height, a single consignment of thirty-two thousand dead humming-birds; and another received at one time thirty thousand aquatic birds, and three hundred thousand pairs of wings.'

THINK what a price to pay,
Faces so bright and gay,
Just for a hat!
Flowers unvisited, mornings unsung,
Sea-ranges bare of the wings that o'erswung, —
Bared just for that!

Think of the others, too,
Others and *mothers*, too,
Bright-Eyes in hat!
Hear you no mother-groan floating in air,
Hear you no little moan, — birdlings' despair, —
Somewhere, for that?

Caught 'mid some mother-work,
Torn by a hunter Turk,
Just for your hat!
Plenty of mother-heart yet in the world:
All the more wings to tear, carefully twirled!
Women want that?

Oh, but the shame of it,
Oh, but the blame of it, —
Price of a hat!
Just for a jauntiness brightening the street!
This is your halo, O faces so sweet, —
Death: and for that!

1885

NOT ALL THERE

'The innocents, of whom the Scotch say, "They are not all there."'

SOMETHING short in the making,—
Something lost on the way,
As the little Soul was taking
Its path to the break of Day!

Only his mood or passion,
But it twitched an atom back;
And she, for her gods of fashion,
Filched from the pilgrim's pack.

The Father did not mean it,
The Mother did not know,
No human eye had seen it,—
But the little Soul needed it so!

Through the street there passed a cripple,
Maimed from before its birth;
On the strange face gleamed a ripple,
Like a half-dawn on the earth.

It passed, — and it awed the city,
  As one not alive nor dead :
Eyes looked and brimmed with pity, —
  'He is not all there,' they said.

Not all ! for part is behind it,
  Lying dropt on the way :
That part — could two but find it,
  How welcome the end of Day !

1883

LET IT BEGIN HERE

Captain Parker's words on Lexington Green: 'Don't fire, unless you are fired on; but if they want a war, let it begin here!'

THE April thrills along the hills,
The violets wake below,
But never to the thrill they knew
A hundred years ago,
What day the calls from pasture-walls
In echoing signals ran,
And swift replied the country-side
To what they here began.

'Let it begin!' a Voice within
The waiting farmers spake, —
His voice in whom the Aprils bloom,
In whom the Nations wake!
Old lands had yearned, old dreamers burned
Fair Freedom's day to win,
And still it fled, — the farmers said,
'Now let it here begin!'

And at the word a Nation stirred!
  Without or king or caste,
Serene and strong to right their wrong,
  THE PEOPLE rose at last!
All quick to feel the common weal,
  The many in the one,
Heart pledged to heart no more to part: —
  And this was here begun!

For the Lexington Centennial, April 19, 1875

AUNT PHILLIS'S GUEST

St. Helena Island in 1863

I WAS young and 'Harry' was strong,
The summer was bursting from sky and plain,
Thrilling our blood as we bounded along, —
When a picture flashed, and I dropped the rein.

A black sea-creek, with snaky run
Slipping through low green leagues of sedge;
An ebbing tide, and a setting sun;
A hut and a woman by the edge.

Her back was bent and her wool was gray;
The wrinkles lay close on the withered face;
Children were buried and sold away, —
The Freedom had come to the last of a race!

She lived from a neighbor's hominy-pot ;
And praised the Lord, if 'the pain' passed by ;
From the earthen floor the smoke curled out
Through shingles patched with the bright blue sky.

'Aunt Phillis, you live here all alone?'
I asked, and pitied the gray old head ;
Sure as a child, in quiet tone,
'*Me and Jesus, Massa,*' she said.

I started, for all the place was aglow
With a presence I had not seen before ;
The air was full of a music low,
And the Guest Divine stood at the door!

Ay, it was true that the Lord of Life,
Who seeth the widow give her mite,
Had watched this slave in her weary strife,
And shown himself to her longing sight.

The hut and the dirt, the rags and the skin,
The grovelling want and the darkened mind, —

I looked on this; but the Lord, within :
I would what he saw was in me to find!

A childlike soul, whose faith had force
To see what the angels see in bliss :
She lived, and the Lord lived ; so, of course,
They lived together, — she knew but this.

And the life that I had almost despised
As something to pity, so poor and low,
Had already borne fruit that the Lord so prized
He loved to come near and see it grow.

No sorrow for her that the life was done :
A few days more of the hut's unrest,
A little while longer to sit in the sun, —
Then — *He* would be host, and *she* would be guest!

And up above, if an angel of light
Should stop on his errand of love some day
To ask, 'Who lives in the mansion bright?'
'Me and Jesus,' Aunt Phillis will say.

A fancy, foolish and fond, does it seem?
And things are not as Aunt Phillises dream?

Friend, surely so!
For this I know, —
That our faiths are foolish by falling below,
Not coming above, what God will show;
That his commonest thing hides a wonder vast,
To whose beauty our eyes have never passed;
That his *fact* in the present, or in the to-be,
Outshines the best that we think we see.

THE NEGRO BURYING-GROUND

St. Helena Island in 1863

'Mid the sunny flat of the cotton-field
Lies an acre of forest-tangle still;
A cloister dim, where the gray moss waves
And the live-oaks lock their arms at will.

Here in the shadows the slaves would hide
As they dropped the hoe at death's release,
And leave no sign but a sinking mound
To show where they passed on their way to peace.

This was the Gate — there was none but this —
To a Happy Land where men were men;
And the dusky fugitives, one by one,
Stole in from the bruise of the prison-pen.

When, lo! in the distance boomed the guns,
The bruise was over, and 'Massa' had fled!
But *Death* is the 'Massa' that never flees,
So still to the oaks they bore the dead.

'T was at set of sun ; a tattered troop
  Of children circled a little grave,
Chanting an anthem rich in its peace
  As ever pealed in cathedral-nave, —

The *A*, *B*, *C*, that the lips below
  Had learnt with them in the school to shout.
Over and over they sung it slow,
  Crooning a mystic meaning out.

A, B, C, D, E, F, G, —
  Down solemn alphabets they swept :
The oaks leaned close, the moss swung low, —
  What strange new sound among them crept ?

The holiest hymn that the children knew !
  'T was dreams come real, and heaven come near ;
'T was light, and liberty, and joy,
  And 'white-folks'-sense,' — and God right here !

Over and over; they dimly felt
This was the charm could make black white,
This was the secret of 'Massa's' pride,
And this, unknown, made the negro's night.

What could they sing of braver cheer
To speed on her unseen way the friend?
The children were facing the mystery Death
With the deepest prayer that their hearts could send.

Children, too, and the mysteries last!
We are but comrades with them *there*, —
Stammering over a meaning vast,
Crooning our guesses of how and where.

But the children were right with their A, B, C;
In our stammering guess so much we say!
The singers were happy, and so are we:
Deep as our wants are the prayers we pray.

GETTYSBURG IN 1885

After a visit to the Panorama

ONE step from the busy street, and there,
With the summer hills around,
In the heart of a summer day it lies, —
A Battle without a sound.

Whatever of battle the eyes may see —
The sweep of men to death,
The dash of horse, and the rush of gun,
The musket's fiery breath ;

The massing clouds of the cannon-smoke,
The horror of bursting shell,
The wreck of wheel and caisson,
The surgeon's mimic hell ;

The uptossed arms and the ashen cheek,
The droop of the shattered limb,
The men by the blood-pools in the grass,
The bodies stiff and grim.

We see it all, and we hear no sound !
  We listen for roar and boom,
For the crack and the ping and the bullet's
    thud : —
  A stillness like the tomb !

No rattle to wheel, no clatter to hoof,
  No bugle-call or cry,
No fierce hurrah along that line
  Where the columns press to die ;

Those sullen prisoners give no oath ;
  The face in the grass no groan ;
Its 'Good-bye !' reached a thousand miles
  But *we* catch never a tone.

Ah, if we *could* add sound to sight,
  And then could paint the strain
And the splendor in the soldier's heart,
  Breasting death's hurricane,

And the flashing signals of his thought
  To homes that signal back,
And the woman's face and the climbing child
  That lie in the bullet's track ;

And the breathless pause, each pulse-beat
hushed,
Of a watching continent;
And the sense of a nation's fate at stake
In the awful tournament;

And the upturned brows of a million slaves
Reading the face of God
For the word that would lift them into Men,
Or doom them back to the Clod, —

Could we rim all this in those summer hills
And add to what eyes see,
In the cloister quaint by the city street
Then 'Gettysburg' would be!

And yet, as I hark, the soundlessness
Seems song of the war's release,
And the beauty to hint, 'mid Battle's woe,
The Battle's after-peace.

THE RIGHT GOES MARCHING ON

For Decoration Day

ONE moment on the scaffold, and he left it
Holy Ground!
Three hundred thousand heroes now lie
guarding it around,
And reverent hearts are pilgrim still to many
a sacred mound, —
And the Right goes marching on!

God had counted up the slave-graves, and
heard the black man's moan,
Till at last his leaping thunder shook the
awful Judgment-Throne, —
'For each lash a cannon-crash! For each
cry a battle-groan!' —
And the Right goes marching on.

The Hands wherein the sparrow falls, that
beckon to the star,
Are Hands that harness unseen dooms to
Wrong's triumphal car,

And the steeds untiring draw the nations
trembling to the Bar, —
And the Right goes marching on!

Then, if perchance a nation's Soul from out
her shame shall rise,
And light of Justice kindle fresh within her
chastened eyes,
The God who dooms shall save her by the
pain that purifies, —
And the Right goes marching on!

Lo, the flowers are all a-blossom, and the
grasses are a-wave
Where the bodies of our hero dead are sleep-
ing in the grave:
So shall beauty crown salvation through the
Hands so strong to save, —
And the Right goes marching on!

1884

OUR COUNTRY

'O Beautiful, my Country!'
Be thine a nobler care
Than all thy wealth of commerce,
Thy harvests waving fair:
Be it thy pride to lift up
The manhood of the poor;
Be thou to the oppressèd
Fair Freedom's open door!

For thee our fathers suffered,
For thee they toiled and prayed;
Upon thy holy altar
Their willing lives they laid.
Thou hast no common birthright,
Grand memories on thee shine;
The blood of pilgrim nations
Commingled flows in thine.

O Beautiful, our Country!
Round thee in love we draw;
Thine is the grace of Freedom,
The majesty of Law.
Be Righteousness thy sceptre,
Justice thy diadem;
And on thy shining forehead
Be Peace the crowning gem!

1884

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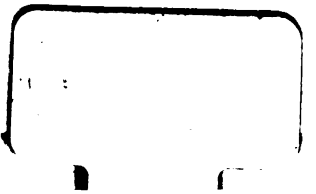
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